

What is claimed is:

- 1 1. A license key issuing system comprising:
2 a network which connects a license-issuing computer, a seller computer
3 and a purchaser computer,
4 the purchaser computer having capability to input client information,
5 product information and license program information, the purchaser computer requesting
6 the license-issuing computer to issue issuance of a license key by inputting the client
7 information, the product information and the license program information;
8 the seller computer receiving the client information, the product
9 information and the license program information from the purchaser computer and
10 requesting the issuance of the license key together with the product information and the
11 license program information, the seller computer transmitting the license key to the
12 purchaser computer upon receiving the license key from the license-issuing computer;
13 and
14 the license-issuing computer having license key issuing means, the license-
15 issuing computer receiving the product information and the licensing program
16 information from the seller computer and issuing a license key of a program specified by
17 the license program information through the seller computer to the purchaser computer
18 when the authentication of the product information is normally finished.
- 1 2. A license-issuing computer which is connected to a network and
2 issues a license key through the network, the license-issuing computer including:
3 a program which allows the license-issuing computer to receive product
4 information and license program information out of client information, the product
5 information and the license program information which a purchaser inputs from a seller
6 computer through a network, and
7 a program which performs the authentication of the product information
8 and issues a license key of a program specified by the license program information when
9 the authentication is normally finished.
- 1 3. A license-issuing computer which is connected to a network and
2 performs the issuance of a license key through the network, the license-issuing computer
3 including:

a program which allows the license-issuing computer to receive product number and license program name out of client information, the product number and the license program name which a purchaser inputs or the product number, the license program name and a trial license key out of the client information, the product number and the license program name and the trial license key which the purchaser inputs from a seller computer through the network, and

a program which performs the authentication of the product number and, when the authentication is normally finished, issues a trial license key which allows the use of a program specified by the license program name for a given time upon receiving the product number and the license program name or issues a special license key which extends the trial period by the trial license key upon receiving the product number, the license program name and the trial license key.

4. A license-issuing computer characterized in that the license-issuing computer of claim 3 issues a license for a program installed in a data storage system.

5. A license-issuing computer which is connected to a network and performs the issuance of a license key through the network, the license-issuing computer including:

a program in which the license-issuing computer receives a product number and a license program name inputted by a purchaser or the product number, the license program name and a trial license key inputted by the purchaser through the network,

a program in which the license-issuing computer performs the authentication of the product number when the product number and the license program name are received, and issues the trial license key which allows the use of a program specified for the license program name for a given period when the authentication is normally finished, and

a program in which the license-issuing computer performs the authentication of the trial license key when the license-issuing computer receives the license program name and the trial license key and has a program which issues a paid license key which exhibits a higher function as the trial period becomes shorter.

6. A seller computer which requests the issuance of a license key to a license-issuing computer in response to a request from a purchaser computer through a network, the seller computer including:

a program which requests the inputting of client information, product information and license program information to the purchaser computer through the network,

a program which receives the client information, the product information and the license program information from the purchaser computer through the network and transmits the product information and the license program information to the license-issuing computer, and

a program which receives the license key from the license-issuing computer and transmits the license key to the purchaser computer.

A seller computer which requests the issuance of a license key to a license-issuing computer in response to a request from a purchaser computer through a network, the seller computer including :

a program which requests the inputting of client information, product information and license program information to the purchaser computer through the network,

a program which receives the client information, the product information and the license program information from the purchaser computer through the network and transmits the product information and the license program information to the license-issuing computer, and

a program which receives the license key from the license-issuing computer and transmits the license key to the purchaser computer.

7. A seller computer which requests a trial license key which allows the use of a program for a given period and a special license key which extends a trial period of the trial license key to a license-issuing computer in response to a request from a purchaser computer through a network, the seller computer including:

means for inputting a product number, a license program name and a trial license key communicated from a purchaser,

means for outputting the license key received from the license-issuing computer,

a program which requests the inputting of the client information, the product number and the license program name to the purchaser computer through the network,

a program which receives the client information, the product information and the license program information from the purchaser computer through the network and transmits the product information and the license program information to the license-issuing computer or transmits the product number, the license program name and the trial license key inputted by the inputting means to the license-issuing computer, and

a program which receives the trial license key from the license-issuing computer and transmits the license key to the purchaser computer or receives the special license key from the license-issuing computer and outputting the special license key from the outputting means.

8. A data transfer method of a seller computer requesting the issuance of a license key to a license-issuing computer in response to a request from a purchaser computer through a network, the data transfer method including

a step in which the seller computer receives client information, product information and license program information from the purchaser computer,

a step in which the seller computer transmits the product information and the license program information to the license-issuing computer,

a step in which the seller computer receives a license key from the license-issuing computer, and

a step in which the seller computer transmits the license key to the purchaser computer.

9. A data transfer method of a seller computer requesting the issuance of a license key to a license-issuing computer in response to a request from a purchaser computer through a network, the data transfer method including:

a step in which the seller computer receives client information, a product number and a license program name from a purchaser computer,

a step in which the seller computer transmits the product number and the license program name to the license-issuing computer,

a step in which the seller computer receives a trial license key which allows the use of the program for a given period from the license computer,

10 a step in which the seller computer transmits the license key to the
 11 purchaser computer,
 12 a step in which the seller computer inputs the client information, the
 13 product number, the license program name and the trial license key communicated from a
 14 purchaser therein,
 15 a step in which the seller computer transmits the product number, the
 16 license program name and the trial license key to the license-issuing computer,
 17 a step in which the seller computer receives a special license key for
 18 extending the deadline of the trial period by the trial license key from the license-issuing
 19 computer, and
 20 a step in which the seller computer outputs the special license key and
 21 transmits the special license key to the purchaser.

1 10. A licensing issuing method of a license issuing system comprising
 2 a license-issuing computer, a seller computer, a purchaser computer, and a network which
 3 connects the license-issuing computer, the seller computer and the purchaser computer,
 4 wherein
 5 the license-issuing computer requests the inputting of client information,
 6 product information and license program information to the purchaser computer through
 7 the seller computer,
 8 the purchaser computer transfers the client information, the product
 9 information and the license program information to the seller computer in response to the
 10 request from the license-issuing computer,
 11 the seller computer transfers the product information and the license
 12 program information out of the client information, the product information and the license
 13 program information received from the purchaser computer to the license-issuing
 14 computer, and
 15 the license-issuing computer issues a license key for a program specified
 16 by the license program information to the purchaser computer through the seller computer
 17 when the authentication of the product information received by the seller computer is
 18 normally finished.

11. A license issuing method of a license-issuing computer which is connected to a network and performs the issuance of a license key through the network, the license issuing method including:

a step in which the license-issuing computer receives product information and license program information out of client information, the product information and the license program information which a purchaser inputs from a seller computer through the network,

a step in which the license-issuing computer performs the authentication of the product information, and

a step in which the license-issuing computer issues a license key for a program specified by the license program information when the authentication is normally finished.

12. A method as in claim 11 wherein the license-issuing computer issues a license key for a program specified by a license program name.

13. A license issuing method of a license-issuing computer which is connected to a network and performs the issuance of a license key through the network, the license issuing method including:

a step in which the license-issuing computer receives product number and a license program name out of client information, the product number and the license program name which a purchaser inputs from a seller computer through the network,

a step in which the license-issuing computer performs the authentication of the product number,

a step in which the license-issuing computer issues a trial license key which allows the use of a program specified by the license program name for a given period when the authentication is normally finished,

a step in which the license-issuing computer receives the product number, the license program name and the trial license key out of client information, the product number, the license program name and the trial license key which a purchaser inputs from the seller computer through the network,

a step in which the license-issuing computer performs the authentication of the trial license key, and

18 a step in which the license-issuing computer issues a special license key
19 which extends a trial period by the trial license key when the authentication is normally
20 finished.

1 14. A license issuing method characterized in that the license issuing
2 method according to claim 13 issues the license for a program installed in a data storage
3 system.

1 15. A license issuing method of a license-issuing computer which is
2 connected to a network and performs the issuance of a license key through the network,
3 the license issuing method including:

4 a step in which the license-issuing computer receives a product number
5 and a license program name which a purchaser inputs through the network,

6 a step in which the license-issuing computer performs the authentication of
7 the product number,

8 a step in which the license-issuing computer issues a trial license key
9 which allows the use of a program specified by the license program name for a given
10 period when the authentication is normally finished,

11 a step in which the license-issuing computer receives the product number,
12 the license program name and the trial license key which the purchaser inputs through the
13 network,

14 a step in which the license-issuing computer performs the authentication of
15 the trial license key, and

16 a step in which the license-issuing computer issues a paid license key
17 which exhibits a higher function as the trial period becomes shorter.

1 16. A license issuing method according to claim 15, wherein the
2 license-issuing computer issues a license for a program installed in a data storage system.

1 17. A license issuing method according to claim 16, wherein the
2 license-issuing computer issues the paid license key which has a larger usable disc
3 capacity as the trial period becomes shorter.